

On This Day: February 25, 2013 – Wrestle War 1990: One Heck Of A Pit Stop Before Sting's Time

Wrestlewar 1990

Date: February 25, 1990

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina

Attendance: 9,894

Commentators: Jim Ross, Terry Funk

We're into 1990 now and Funk has stepped into commentary, so we need a new feud for Flair. That man would have been Sting who had been thrown out of the Horsemen on February 6. At Starrcade, Sting had pinned Flair to win the Iron Man Tournament and asked for a title shot. Flair snapped and turned the Horsemen heel again, destroying Sting in the process. That night, Sting legit hurt his knee so his title match tonight (which he was supposed to win) was postponed. The replacement? Lex Luger, who has had more classics with Flair than should be legally allowed. Let's get to it.

This show is called Wild Thing. The NWA had a habit of adding random titles to shows which have nothing to do with them for the most part.

Dan Spivey is hurt and may be out tonight.

JR and Terry run down the card.

Teddy Long says Spivey is indeed hurt and there will be a replacement for him tonight. There's another surprise later as well.

Kevin Sullivan/Buzz Sawyer vs. Dynamic Dudes

Sawyer is insane and that's about all you need to know about him. He starts with Ace and these people are a bit more receptive than the Philly crowd was in our last show. Speaking of last shows, this is the final major show that Sawyer was on for WCW if that means anything for you. Ace sends him to the floor and a brawl breaks out on the outside. Shane and Sullivan come in and the Dudes keep control with the arm work.

Ace comes in to work on the arm more but Sullivan gets a tag. He also gets in a fight with Sawyer, much to the Dudes' amusement. That's smart: why break up a fight when you can get a breather? Sawyer's arm goes into the post so Shane cranks on it. Out to the floor with Sawyer taking over. Sunset flip gets two for Ace and there's the tag to Shane. Buzz immediately takes him down and hooks a bearhug to take Shane to the mat.

Sullivan comes in and pops Ace, which draws him in so that Sullivan can throw Shane to the floor. Everything breaks down and Johnny botches a flying headscissors. Sawyer goes up and hits a big old flying splash for the pin. That's the interim Raw GM and the Executive Vice President of Talent Relations for you. Funk called it the Jam Sandwich, which is something Brodus should use.

Rating: C-. Not much here as none of these guys was much to watch at this point. I've never been a big fan of Shane and Ace is just ok. He never was all that good as his size became an issue for him but he was too slim to be a power guy. Not a very good match with a total contrast in styles that didn't work at all.

Norman the Lunatic, who is a goofy character that isn't all there upstairs, hits on Missy Hyatt.

Cactus Jack Manson vs. Norman the Lunatic

Yes it's Mick Foley and no he doesn't mean a thing yet. He's pretty much just thrown onto the card here, much like Cuban Assassin was last time. Jack jumps him to start but gets

thrown to the floor with ease. JR: "This will not be a battle of wits. It may be a battle of nitwits." Also Jack's favorite color is light black and wants to be the foreman of the Double Cross Ranch.

Jack rams Norman's head into the buckle and Norman says do it again. A quick bearhug goes on Jack but he's soon whipped over the corner and out to the floor in a big crash. Headbutt knocks Jack off the apron but misses a charge into the post. Back in and Cactus rips at his face. Cactus pounds him down and it's off to a chinlock. The electric chair drop puts Jack down but a splash misses. Jack tries a sunset flip but Norman drops onto him for the pin.

Rating: D. Yeah it was bad but Foley of course would get a lot more going for him. Norman is more famous as Bastian Booger and a lot of other bad characters in WWF. Jack was clearly going to be a guy that bumped like mad, but at the end of the day what sets him apart is that he made people care about him as opposed to guys like say New Jack.

Jim Cornette talks about how things change but some things stay the same. Tonight the Midnights have the Rock N Roll Express, which is something that never changes.

Rock N Roll Express vs. Midnight Express

This is another one of those matches where the starting rating rises up from a C to a B. These guys feuded for probably 6 years on and off and had more classics than you could shake a stick at. Why you would want to shake a stick at it is beyond me but you get the idea. Gibson vs. Stan gets us going. Lane dives to the mat and they counter each other a lot. Gibson counters a counter and drops a fist onto Lane's head to take over.

Cornette gets in an argument with Nick Patrick and wants to box him. This is an old spot they did which always gets a big reaction. Cornette is dispatched quickly and it's Morton vs.

Lane now. The fans are into this too. Bobby gets knocked to the floor and Lane shoves him down as well. We never got a big singles match between those two and I think that's for the best.

Lane vs. Bobby now and they speed things up. Nothing seems to be coming out of the shove from a few moments ago. Off to a test of strength and Morton is losing. He climbs up Bobby, stands on his shoulders, and jumps onto Lane in the corner. Gibson runs off Lane and the Midnights are knocked to the floor. Cornette tries to get in and falls over the top rope so Gibson knocks back down. Both Midnights are double clotheslined to the floor as well and it's been one sided for about the first eight minutes.

Back in now and it's Gibson vs. Lane but Lane still can't get anything going. Morton comes in for a double elbow but gets sent outside. Never mind again as Lane goes into the post. Now it's Eaton again and it's a slugout. Terry gets into this and they both tumble to the floor. Outside Lane slams Morton and the Midnights take over.

Now we get into a much more traditional tag match which was popularized if not perfected by these teams, making this a fun match. Morton is sent to the floor and rammed into various metal objects. He manages a sunset flip but Cornette grabs the referee. Morton tries an O'Connor Roll but Lane makes a blind tag and hooks a neckbreaker for two. Eaton goes after the arm with a single arm DDT and into a hammerlock.

Lane comes in for a quick reverse chinlock before bringing in Eaton for a top rope elbow. Back to the arm by Lane. Man the Midnights tag in fast. Eaton works on the arm again with the hammerlock and the Midnights set for the Rocket Launcher. It hits the knees though and here's Gibson. Everything breaks down but he's still 2-1. The Midnights load up the Flapjack but Gibson rolls through for the pin on Lane.

Rating: B+. Oh come on it's the Midnights vs. Rock N Roll. There's practically no way that this can be screwed up. It's a great speed match and they know each other so well that they're going to have a good match through familiarity if nothing else. Fun stuff here but somehow not their best work together.

The Road Warriors have Sting armbands on and are ready for the Chicago street fight up next.

Skyscrapers vs. Road Warriors

Street fight. The Skyscrapers are almost a revolving door of members and in this case it's Mark Callous and a masked man who is played by Mike Enos. The Skyscrapers have Teddy Long to counter Paul Ellering. Long comes in to fight Ellering and is knocked to the floor with one punch. Everyone is in street clothes. What street these would be normal on I have no idea but the thought is there.

The Warriors dominate to start and here comes Doom for no apparent reason. They're in suits and Teddy goes to join them. Enos gets in some offense to take over (he's just the masked man here but I'll be calling him Enos to keep things clearer) but it's pretty short lived. The Road Warriors shrug it off and Hawk hits a running clothesline off the apron to Callous. They get back in and this slows down even more. The Warriors throw Callous out and the Doomsday Device kills Enos easily for the pin.

Rating: D. I love the Road Warriors but they need the right kind of team to make things work. The Skyscrapers were never quite a team that worked, at least not here. They were good at destroying jobbers and small people but having brawls like this was never really anything worth seeing.

Doom comes in post match and brawls with the Warriors in a much more entertaining fight. This feud never really happened as the Warriors jumped to the WWF in June.

US Tag Titles: Freebirds vs. Brian Pillman/Z-Man

The Birds are challenging here. They get sent to the floor immediately and the champs steal their clothes and dance around as Badstreet plays in the background. Funny moment. The crowd is all over the Birds. They weren't much in the ring but they were heat machines. Today is Flair's birthday according to JR. We finally get going with Brian vs. Hayes. Brian knocks him around with a clothesline and Garvin fluffs his hair.

Speaking of Garvin here he is and he gets Z-Man. Z takes him down with a headlock but misses a dropkick. Garvin, ever the Rhodes Scholar, ducks his head and gets kicked in the face. Back to Brian for another headlock. Hayes comes back in and things are going slowly to start, implying that they have a lot of time to work with. Sunset flip with a great jump gets two for Pillman.

Z-Man works on the arm and goes into a Fujiwar Armbar to Hayes. Back to Garvin who loses any advantage that Hayes had gotten on Z-Man. Pillman comes in as the fans seem a bit distracted. Hayes comes in and hooks a sleeper (sleep hold according to Ross) as JR talks about Paul Boesch, the promoter of Houston Wrestling for decades, demonstrating this hold in the second World War.

Brian escapes and sends him into the corner but charges into a great left hand to put him down. Brian rolls through a cross body for two. Back to Garvin as this is going a lot longer than I was expecting it to go. Since Garvin can't manage to keep Brian in one place he makes the tag to Z-Man. Z-Man puts the Z Lock (sleeper) on Hayes but Garvin comes off the top for the save.

Garvin hooks a chinlock as this match has gone well over fifteen minutes so far. Now they mix things up with a Hayes chinlock. After 18 minutes, we're told this is a rematch from the finals of the tournament where Z-Man and Pillman won the

titles in the first place. Z-Man gets a small package for two. Hayes is like enough of that and goes back to the chinlock. JR thinks Hayes looks like Alice Cooper. Terry wants to know if Hayes knows who Buffalo Bill is.

Hayes goes up and kind of steps off with no significant contact being made. Back to Garvin as this needs to end really soon. Who decided to give the Birds over twenty minutes? Top rope fist gets two for Hayes after a non-tag. Bulldog gets two as Pillman breaks it up. Back to the chinlock #4 but Zenk drops him with a DDT of his own. There's the tag to Pillman and the fans care more than I expected them to. Pillman cleans house but Hayes brings in a title but Pillman comes off the top with a cross body as the title is being taken out to retain the titles.

Rating: D. Technically the match was fine but MY GOODNESS this ran long. It clocks in at almost twenty four minutes which is just far too long. Pillman and Zenk can easily go that long but the Birds were already through their whole set of stuff at about 10 minutes in. The solution of course? Go 14 minutes past that. WAY too long and if you cut this to like 12 minutes it's probably an okish match.

The Birds DDT both champs post match.

The Steiners are all fired up and dedicate their match to Sting. Rick calls himself a big bad bully beater upper.

Tag Titles: Ole Anderson/Arn Anderson vs. Steiner Brothers

This was supposed to be Tully/Arn but he failed a drug test and was pretty much finished in mainstream wrestling so they brought out Ole in the finals part of his in ring career to fill in for him. Scott starts with Arn and the ring is quickly cleared by pure power. The Steiners are champions if that's unclear. The Andersons try to double team and that fails as well. Rick and Scott go after the knee of Ole so Ole bails and almost says some very bad words.

Rick vs. Ole now and it turns into another brawl very quickly with the champs clearing the ring again. Rick hooks on a headlock to Arn and JR talks about Rick wanting to be an elementary school science teacher. Terry wants to know why he isn't anyone's favorite wrestler. Arn gets in a knee and goes up but has Rick waiting on him. For once a Horseman thinks better of it and climbs down.

Arn bails to the floor and both Steiners are in again. That's been a habit of theirs tonight. Back to Ole with a headlock on Scott which goes nowhere. Arn comes in again and takes an atomic drop, allowing him to do his great selling of it. Figure Four is broken up by Ole who then comes in legally. For some reason Ole tries amateur stuff on Scott who easily suplexes him and tags in Rick.

The Andersons get an advantage for what must have been a good three seconds but Rick suplexes Arn to stop it cold. Ole tries to hit Rick in the head and that goes about as well as anything else has. The Andersons are brothers at this point for those of you that try to keep track of how they're related. They go after Rick's arm which is their trademark. Ole tries to hit Rick in the head which is enough for Rick to make the tag back to Scott.

Scott and Arn go outside and Scott accidentally clotheslines the post. You know Arn is going to go after that like Elvis on a pound of bacon. Ole comes back in and the arm work continues. For some reason the Andersons keep switching off from the arm to general attacks which never work. A Vader Bomb gets knees and there's a Frankensteiner and a hot tag to Rick. In a fast ending, Rick punches them both down and a fast small package pins Ole.

Rating: C-. It's not bad but again this was long and not that great. The Andersons were a lot stupider than you would expect from them here which is very Un-Horsemenlike. It's much better than the previous one but it's still long and boring. It was

too slow and these guys didn't click at all for the most part.

The Andersons get in a double team move on the arm of Scott post match to injure it.

Lex says he's nervous but he's going to Rack Flair tonight and win the title.

Flair says that he's great and has Woman says that Lex needs to get his engine started, whatever that means.

NWA World Title: Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger

Sting is with Lex while Woman is with Flair. The idea here is that Sting was supposed to get the title shot here but legit injured his knee which makes this out to be a "tragedy" according to the introductions. This is the main event and we have 45 minutes to go during Flair's entrance. Chain wrestling to start with no one having an advantage. Flair shoves the referee and is shoved right back.

Flair agrees to a test of strength and down goes Naitch. Flair bails to the floor and says Woo a lot. Lex knocks him to the floor again so Ric takes the walk. Luger chases him down and the beating continues. Lex is US Champion here. A gorilla press by Luger puts Flair down so Flair tries the chops. Those do about as well as they do against Sting and Lex is all fired up.

There's a bear hug which Luger bends forward for a two count. Luger hits ten punches in the corner but Flair ducks a clothesline and Luger falls to the floor. Flair chops away outside and back in they go. Scratch that as Flair dumps him again and calls for Woman to get on the apron. With the referee distracted Flair sends him into the barricade and chops him down. Flair punches him back down to the floor as I guess he's looking for the countout.

Back in for more than ten seconds this time and Flair drops a

knee on the head. Another knee drop hits for two. Lex pops up for his comeback but misses a corner charge and is right back down again. This is one of those matches that's hard to make fun of because they both know what they're doing and have such great chemistry together that there's not much they can't do together.

Flair hooks a hammerlock and stomps on the arm. Lex starts coming back again so Flair pokes him in the eyes, which Funk calls the Achilles Tendon of big men. Luger gets caught in another hammerlock and when he tries to punch his way out of it, the referee stops the fist, allowing Flair to poke him in the eye again. Ric works on the arm even more but Lex grabs the throat to break it up. He throws Flair into the corner for the Flair Flip and we go to the floor.

Flair chops Lex again and Luger is all fired up. Back in and Flair is caught in a sleeper which puts him down. The champ gets his foot on the ropes and manages a belly to back to escape. Luger suplexes him right back and goes after the knee. He wraps it around the post and tries a figure four. Even JR basically says it's awful as he spins the wrong way, making him look like he's a nine year old imitating it.

Ric fights up and chops some more but walks into a powerslam for two. The pop on the kickout was big as the fans thought it was over. Flair still can't get that the chops don't work and Lex is all fired up. After a quick exchange outside, Luger backslides him for two. Luger punches him in the corner but Flair atomic drops him, hurting Lex's knee in the process. Where are these knee injuries in matches against people not named Flair?

A pair of top rope axhandles gets two for Flair. Butterfly suplex gets two. Here's a sleeper by Flair as he hasn't gone after the knee much yet. That gets broken after awhile and NOW it's knee time. We're probably half an hour into this. Flair works on the knee in his usual manner as Sting comes back to

ringside. Sting cheers Luger on enough for him to reverse the hold and it's broken up.

He slaps Lex to fire him up and Flair bails fast. Out to the floor and Lex no sells a whip into the barricade. There's a gorilla press and Flair goes up, only to get slammed down. Luger clotheslines him to the floor then suplexes him back in for two. There's the powerslam which Luger earlier said would set up the Rack. Woman distracts Luger, allowing Flair to knee Lex in the back, crushing the referee in the process.

Lex clotheslines Flair down but there's no referee. A superplex kills Flair dead again but the Andersons run in because there's no referee. There's the Torture Rack and the referee is back up, but the Andersons go after Sting. Luger drops the hold when Flair is about to give up, going to save his friend. The Horsemen keep him out there long enough for the count out and a HUGE boo from the crowd. Sting's day was coming soon though.

Rating: A. See, THIS is how you book a screwjob finish. It made perfect sense for Lex to go out there, meaning that for once he wasn't an idiot. They had the crowd into this and when you can do that during a forty minute match, that's usually a great sign. It was an excellent match and the ending is about as perfect as it could have been. Luger would get a rematch the next month in a cage and then it was Sting's turn.

The Steiners come out for the save. Good thing they couldn't be out 40 seconds earlier to let Lex get the title isn't it?

Overall Rating: B-. Still not a classic but it was a better show than Halloween Havoc for sure. The two later tag matches weren't anything of note and you can always find a good Express vs. Express match. Still though, this was a good show overall and there really isn't anything all that terrible on it. I'd highly recommend the clipped version or one with a fast forward button at the ready.

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